

**MIDDLE ATLANTIC  
Region 1  
HHS-N-276-2011-00003-C  
iPads to Support Outreach, Mobile Technology and  
Instruction Outside the Talbot Research Library  
Fox Chase Cancer Center  
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## **Executive Summary**

We requested iPad2s for librarians. Our goals were for librarians to learn and use mobile technology, to support users in using mobile technologies, and to expand and enhance the library's outreach efforts by using it. We also considered that our personal visibility and that of the library would also increase if we were successful with achieving these goals. Questions that we considered in planning, implementing, and evaluating this project is as follows:

- Were the iPads effective tools to use?
- Did the iPads enhance presentations?
- Were more users reached by using iPads?
- Did the iPads stimulate interest in using mobile technology?
- Did the iPads enable librarians to learn, support, and promote mobile technology?

Prior to receiving the iPad 2s, librarians experienced difficulty in being able to effectively demonstrate library resources during invited talks, orientation fairs, and in informal encounters around the campus. Users were starting to get iPads and we wanted to be able to support them with questions or issues that they may have. Since our collection has evolved to be almost entirely electronic, few users were coming into the library to consult or ask for help, so we needed a portable tool that would help us demonstrate our e-resources.

We chose to focus our efforts on using the iPads to during orientation fairs so that our newest colleagues were aware of basic library resources and services. The iPads worked extremely well in the orientation fairs. They seemed to engage the users since they were fast, easier to view (since sections could be made bigger if needed), and were more reliable than the old laptops that we previously used. They were easy and fast to set up and take down. We were also able to reach all the attendees in the allotted time period, which we were unable to accomplish prior to using the iPads.

Although we found the iPads intuitive and easy to learn, it was essential to have to support of our IT's Desktop Support Team in implementing this project. They set up our profiles in the devices so that they were ready to use when we received them. We also needed their assistance to answer questions about the devices and when using them in conjunction with other equipment.

The biggest difference this project made was creating opportunities to engage users, so I would recommend that every librarian acquire a tablet. How many times has someone seen you in the cafeteria and had a question about the library or one of its resources or when something needed a quick look-up during a meeting? A picture is worth a thousand words, and most of the time they were extremely effective as teaching tools. Before the iPad one would have to "get back to you" with a response or schedule sometime to meet but this tool enabled us to be helpful "on the spot". These machines will help you help your users and reach them wherever you and they, happen to be.

### **Minority Populations Served**

African Americans: No

American Indians/Alaska Natives: No

Asian Americans: No

Hispanics/Latinos: No

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: No

Other: No

## Approaches and Interventions Used

This project had three goals. These were:

1. Librarians learn to use mobile technology and incorporate its use into daily workflow.
  - a. Librarians started using the iPads immediately upon receipt on February 1.
  - b. Librarians established an Apple ID for the library in order to download apps on all the machines.
  - c. Librarians purchased iTunes card to cover costs of apps.
  - d. Librarians attended a two part webinar, "Integrating iPads and Computer Tablets into Library Services" on March 8 and March 15. This was hosted by the ALA (American Library Association).

2. The library's outreach efforts are enhanced and expanded
  - a. Librarians use iPads during orientation fairs; two librarians attend each monthly fair. Additionally, specific programs outside of the general orientation program also scheduled groups for orientation, ie the nurse anesthesia program and the iPad was used to orient these groups, too.
  - b. Librarians use iPads for scheduled group presentations. Some of these sessions were monthly staff or collaborative group meetings and librarians served as invited speakers.
  - c. Librarians use iPads for scheduled individual presentations. Some of these were librarian-solicited and others were patron-solicited.
  - d. Librarians use iPads during informal chance encounters around the campus. We carried them with us when we attended meetings, during lunch periods in the cafeteria, and during tea times in the cafeteria. Sometimes these chance encounters turned into an opportunity to help someone or teach something.

3. The library will support users in using mobile technology and integrate it into library service
  - a. Librarians began to receive and answer questions on apps, using the iPads, etc.
  - b. Librarians publicized helpful apps in February's "What's New" column on our blog, Talbot Topics <http://talbotresearchlibrary.wordpress.com/2012/02/29/whats-new-february-2012/>
  - c. Librarians create LibGuide on mobile technology and revise it to reflect questions received and librarian explorations about apps.

## Evaluation Activities

The project was evaluated by librarian testimonials and de-briefings after presentations and by assessing what new employees learned about the library and its services during the orientation fair.

The iPads were used during orientation fairs for new employees in February, March, and April, 2012. Approximately 80 employees were reached during the orientation fairs. Follow-up questions were sent to attendees within a day of completing the orientation fair to assess that employees were aware of basic resources and services provided by the Talbot Research Library. The follow-up questions were:

- I am more aware of the resources and services offered by the library as a result of the orientation? Y or N
- What journals the library subscribes? Y or N
- If the library owns a particular book title? Y or N
- What databases I can access from the library? Y or N
- How to request a literature search? Y or N
- How to obtain materials that are not in the library's collection? Y or N

We received 20 responses and, in almost each case, patrons answered Y to each question, so we concluded that we had reached the new employees and were successful in communicating our basic resources and services.

Another significant segment of our evaluation had to do with librarian testimonials and de-briefings after presentations. Librarians believed that the iPad absolutely helped them reach their audiences. They believed that presentations were enhanced by the fast response time that the machines had to internet surfing and also by the use of the "pinch and zoom" feature. They were very portable and easy to set up and take down, although working with older projectors necessitated using IT support. Users seemed engaged and interested and asked questions during the presentation. The iPads proved to be faster and more reliable than the old laptops and gave our audiences the impression that we were on the cutting edge of using technology. The cons were that we experienced some technical flaws, like the lack of flash support and a problem with the project cord loosening, but still were an improvement over using the laptops.

We have begun to get questions about using the iPads and have recorded these among the questions that we received:

- Can an iPad be used for a PowerPoint presentation?
- How do I search a database from the library's website on my iPad?
- How do I use a journal from the library's collection on my iPad?
- How do I use the micromedex app on my iPad?
- Can I use an app to access UpToDate on my iPad?
- What are some good apps to use for word processing on the iPad?

One librarian designed a mobile technology lib guide to answer these questions. We will continue to add and edit it as we continue to assess apps and according to the questions that are received.

I believe that we accomplished the goals that our project set out to accomplish. The project also helped enhance librarians' visibility in the campus.

## Problems or Barriers Encountered

We got a later start on the project than we had anticipated. I had hoped that all the equipment could have been ordered and configured in December, and that we librarians could start using them in January. Unfortunately, final paperwork took longer than anticipated in December and January, probably also due to folks taking off for the Christmas and New Year's holidays, so our devices couldn't be ordered until mid to late January. However, we were able to use them upon receiving them on February 1, and they were so intuitive and quick to learn that we felt that we didn't need that extra month-long period to learn to use them before we started using them with our clientele.

A significant barrier that we encountered is that the iPads don't support flash programs. This was disappointing since I intended to use it to demonstrate NIH Compliance using My Bibliography to scientists and clinicians, and the part about publication compliance uses flash. We also ran into this problem when we wanted to demonstrate collaboration graphs of our staff publications database, that also uses flash programming. However, we were able to find a "work around" by using the slideshark app to capture a PowerPoint of the flash-produced diagram. This worked but required preparation in advance and reduced spontaneity in being able to show these features to our clientele "on the fly".

There were also compatibility issues in using the iPads with some of the overhead projection equipment. Since a variety of equipment exists throughout the campus, librarians had to request assistance with an IT staffer prior to group presentations to ensure that the group would be able to view the presentation on the iPad.

Not everything one needs comes in the box with the iPad. We seemed to discover a shortcoming and then had to find an appropriate "app" to obtain the functionality that we wanted. There are a great many apps, so it took time to identify the one or ones that we wanted to add to our machines.

## **Continuation Plans**

Librarians will continue to use the iPads in outreach, in orientations, and for presentations. We will also continue to research apps and to use them in our daily work and then communicate what we learn to our clientele on our blog, Talbot Topics, and in our libguide.

We will assess interest in starting a mobile user interest group, where we all could learn from each other's experiences and explore various topics. I would also like the library support staff to become familiar with using the devices so that they would feel more comfortable in handling questions from users. There is also some interest in obtaining another type of tablet, perhaps a Samsung tablet, to compare to the functionality of the iPads. This, of course, depends on budgetary allowances for the next fiscal year.

At some point in the future, if project funds become available, it may be feasible to expand this program into an iPad lending program for clinicians and scientists.

## **Impact**

The project caught the interest of our intended audiences and also caught the attention and interest of our administrators. They thought that the project was a creative solution to a problem that we had identified and thought that it raised awareness about mobile technology in the campus. My boss also thought that this project could be expanded (subject to funding) to bring more devices to the Fox Chase Cancer Center. Most folks did not expect to see librarians walking around with iPads, so it certainly raised our visibility in a positive way.

We hope to describe the success of the project in a poster to display at a professional meeting.

## Lessons Learned

Unexpected positive results included:

- Network problems seemed to be overcome by using the iPads. Some websites, for unknown reasons, never seemed to work well on our desktop pc but worked beautifully with the iPad!
- Clients, who described themselves as tech-challenged, had no difficulty using the iPad when we would use it as an instruction tool. They wanted one for themselves!
- Librarians were able to contribute more to meetings by being able to quickly look up an item under discussion.
- The devices were wonderful to bring along when traveling to meetings to keep up with the demand back at the office.
- My boss expressed appreciation at the project and thought that we were being creative and forward-thinking in trying to explore this technology and apply it to our practice of librarianship.
- We really could bring the electronic library with us wherever we went!

Unexpected negative results:

- Paperwork took longer so project implementation time was shorter.
- Devices did not work with flash programs – and more programs used flash than we realized.

Recommendations to others:

- Your project should be doable for you and your staff. An expanded project could come at a later time.
- Obtain support from library staff. Find out if there are any fears and address these before the project starts. Make it fun and interesting. Address all their needs and get them interested in the project and communicate, communicate, communicate throughout the project's entirety.
- Obtain support from the IT Department so that you can ask for their assistance in questions about the devices, compatibility issues, etc.
- Use the devices as much as possible – take them home, bring them to your meetings, bring them to the cafeteria for chance encounters, bring them with you wherever you go. Integrate them into your workflow so that you learn to use them and feel comfortable with them.

What would I do differently?

- Perhaps I would have acquired iPads and an additional tablet, like the Samsung Galaxy, to use with demonstrations requiring flash programming or java, since these aren't supported by the iPad.

**Other**

NA

**Attachment 1: AR summary data: Subcontractor activities**